ABRIEF

Account of the new SECT OF LATITUDE-MEN

Together with some reflections upon the

NEVV PHILOSOPHY.

By *S. P.* of *Cambridge.*

In answer to a Letter from his Friend at *Oxford.*

Quod verum, id antiquissimum.
Fama vix vero favet,
Pejus merenti melior, & pejor bono.

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B.N.C.
F.M.IDAN
OXFORD

For my worthy Friend Mr. S. P. at Cambridge.

Sir,

THat averſation which I perceive to be no leſs in you than in my ſelfe, from the impertinent exchange of meer words and complements would ſoon put a period to our formerly more frequent intercourſe; but that I have a certain itch of curioſity, to know what news there is abroad, which though it may be, is as impertinent, yet it ſerves to correct the ſeverity of that other humour, which if too much indulged, would make the friendſhip of thoſe that live at diſtance too dull and ſtupid, and no better then what may be between the living and the dead. Which conſideration advantaged by that natural inclination of mine, as it hath formerly created you ſome trouble about matters of no great importance, ſo it is likely to ſupply me with frequent occaſions of the ſame kind for the future; but at preſent I ſhall not need to ſeek for that which obtrudes it ſelfe upon me, whether I will or no. I can come into no company of late, but I find the chief diſcourſe to be about a certain new Sect of men called Latitude-men: but though the name be in every mans mouth, yet the explicit meaning of it, or the hereſy which they hold, or the individual perſons that are of it, are as unknown (for ought I can learn) as the order of the Roſy-crucians. On the one ſide I hear them repreſented as a party very dangerous both to the King and Church, as ſeeking to undermine them both: on the other ſide I cannot hear what their particular opinions or practices are, that bear any ſuch dangerous aſpect; to ſay the truth, I can meet with nothing diſtinct concerning them, but that they had their riſe at Cambridge, and are followers for the moſt part, of the new Philoſophy, wherewith they have ſo poyſoned that Fountain, that there are like to iſſue out very unwholſome ſtreams throughout the whole Kingdome. I ſhould be very glad from your own mouth to be reſolved of the meaning of this myſtical name, and the Sect it denominates, which all of ſuddain is become ſo formidable, if we have any Act this year to invite you to Oxford; if not, pray faile not to

do it in as ample a manner in writing, to which if you will add your thoughts also concerning the New Philosophy, *you will not a little gratifie the rest of your old acquaintance here, as well as*

Sir, Yours and

Oxford *May* 15th. 1662. G. B.

For Mr. *G. B.* at *Oxford.*

Sir,

YOurs of the 15th of *May* I lately received, wherein when you desire to see me at *Oxford* next Act, (if you have any,) it is, I suppose, rather of course than out of any such expectation, I having been twice already there, and yet could never be so happy as to get you over to our Commencement. Truly it is as far from *Cambridge* to *Oxford*, as it is from *Oxford* to *Cambridge*, and therefore you must hold me excused if you see me no more there till you have repaid me with a visit here: but to say the truth I must presently after the Commencement prepare for my journey into the *North*, where my friends are ready to fall out with me for neglecting them so long.

2 As for the question you desire to be resolved in, it is more than I dare undertake to do; for though this name of *Latitude-men* be daily exagitated amongst us both in Taverns and Pulpits, and very tragical representations made of them, yet we know as little what it means, as you at *Oxford* do; and I verily believe the men of that Sect are as little able to give in a list of their fraternity, and are as free from any plot against King or Church, as King *Arthur*'s Knights, or the *Rosy-Brotherhood*, which you have very happily compared them with: and truly it is to be suspected they fly in the air too when they meet in their invisible conventicles to promote their unheard of machinations. A *Latitude-man* therefore (according to the best definition that I can collect) is an image of clouts that men set up to encounter with for want of a real enemy; it is a convenient name to reproach a man that you owe a spight to, ('tis what you

will, and you affix it upon whom you will) 'tis ſomething will ſerve to talke of when all other diſcourſe fails.

3. But you would think I had a mind to ſhuffle with you, if I ſhould give you onely this general account; for you will not imagine I can be ſo ſhort-ſighted, but that I may be able to ſee farther into the matter than ſo; that I may not therefore fruſtrate your expectation, I will tell you all that I am able to underſtand or conjecture concerning it; the greateſt part of the men that ſeem to be pointed at under that name, are ſuch, whoſe fortune it was to be born ſo late, as to have their education in the Univerſity, ſince the beginning of the unhappy troubles of this Kingdom, where they aſcended to their preferments by the regular ſteps of election, not much troubling themſelves to enquire into the Titles of ſome of their Electours; they are ſuch as are behind none of their neighbours either in Learning or good manners, and were ſo far from being ſowred with the Leaven of the times they lived in, that they were always looked upon with an evil eye by the ſucceſſive uſurping powers, and the general out-cry was, that the whole Univerſity was over-run with *Arminianiſme*, and was full of men of a Prelatical Spirit, that had apoſtatized to the Onions and Garlick of *Egypt*, becauſe they were generally ordained by Biſhops; and in oppoſition to that hide-bound, ſtrait-lac'd ſpirit that did then prevail, they were called *Latitude-men*; for that was the firſt original of the name, what ever ſenſe hath ſince been put upon it: this was a certain barr to their preferment, as they were ſure to find, if any of them came before the Committee of Tryers, who (as it was reported) had gotten a Liſt of all thoſe that were Ordained by the Biſhop of *Norwich*; and truly if they that were turned out of their preferment, were eſteemed Martyrs, I know not why theſe that were debarred thereof upon the ſame grounds may not be called Confeſſors.

4. And now this being the ſtate of the Univerſity, can it be wonderful, if upon the happy reſtitution of the Church, there were a general readineſs in moſt men to conform to the commands and injunctions there? and yet I am ſorry to

hear ſome men, even in thoſe diſcourſes when they ſhould be careful to deliver nothing but the ſacred oracles of God, talk at ſuch a rate as if they were offended to ſee ſo general a conformity. It ſeems very ſtrange that any ſon of the Church ſhould be diſpleaſed to ſee the number of her children to encreaſe beyond expectation. I hope it is not becauſe there will be the more likely to lay claim to a ſhare in the patrimony; nay I am well aſſured it is far from any of her genuine offſpring, that are faithfull to her intereſt, to be ſo affected; or if at any time ſome leſs becoming expreſſion ſhould drop from them, it hath onely proceeded from miſinformation and want of a right underſtanding of things, which upon better thoughts it is likely they could with unſaid. But it cannot be expected but the proſperity of the Church, will occaſion the flocking in of many leſs worthy perſons, who will be very ambitious to be accompted in the number of her Children, who for want of ſomething elſe to render them more conſiderable than their Neighbours, muſt make uſe of an unmeaſurable oſtentation of their Zeal and forwardneſs, which they think is beſt expreſſed by ſlandering and reproaching thoſe whom they have out-ſtripped, not in ſincerity, but in ſhew and appearance; and it may be ſome of them may hope to expiate their former diſaffections by their preſent overdoing, and think to recommend themſelves by calling others Hypocrites: It were I ſay a thing to be wondered at, if there ſhould not ſome ſuch men as theſe creep into the Church, ſince it is become a profitable way, who by ſuch unworhy acts will endeavour to compaſs their deſignes, and by breeding and fomenting publike differences, will hope to ſerve their private turns; but I am confident their number is very ſmall, and that the moſt part are men of more noble and generous ſpirits, that hate ſuch unworthineſs, however their names may ſometimes be abuſed by ſome few unquiet ſpirits that make all this noiſe and ſtirr. For I muſt tell you, I do not find that the grave heads, or other prudent perſons of the Univerſity give any countenance to this peeviſh talk of ſome few, who for diſtinction ſake, (if *Latitude* be a name of reproach) will not I

hope

hope be offended to be called *Narrow-men*, notwithstanding. But that there may remain no suspicion of their disaffection to the Church in any respect, I will give you a brief accompt of what I conceive to be their sentiments in each point relateing thereunto, which are the Liturgy, the Ceremonies, the government, and the Doctrine of the Church. As for the first, they conceive there ought by all means to be a settled Liturgy, it having alwayes been the practice both of the Jewish and Christian, and more or less retained by all reformed Churches; that there can be no Solemnity of publick worship without it, that it is the greatest check to devotion that can be, to hear men mix their private Opinions with their publick prayers, which are for the most part false, and have an evil influence on the lives of men: yet this hath been almost the Universal practice for these twenty years; The like may be said of those absurd, ridiculous, blasphemous expressions that do so frequently occurre in extempore prayers, under the pretence of being familiar with God Almighty; to say nothing of those seditious and traiterous principles, craftily thereby insinuated into the minds of people, with greater authority than in their Sermons could be done; for as much as there is a greater aw and solemnity in the one above the other; which allso shews how uncomely a thing it is for men to ostentate their parts and abilities therein, as they were wont to doe by their empty Rhetorications and tedious prolixity. Our Latitudinarians therefore are by all means for a Liturgy, and do preferre that of our own Church before all others, admiring the Solemnity, gravity and primitive simplicity of it, its freedome from affected phrases, or mixture of vain and doubtfull opinions; in a word they esteem it to be so good, that they would be loth to adventure the mending of it, for fear of marring it.

As for the Rites and Ceremonies of Divine worship, they do highly approve that vertuous mediocrity which our Church observes between the meretricious gaudiness of the Church of *Rome*, and the squalid sluttery of Fanatick conventicles. Devotion is so overclad by the Papists that she is oppressed and stifled with the multitude of her own garments: *Pars minima*

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est ipsa puella sui: some of our modern reformers to make amends, have stripped her starke naked, till she is become in a manner cold and dead; The Church of *England* only hath dressed her as befits an honourable and vertuous Matron. There are few men so abstractedly intellectuall, but that their devotion had need to be advanced with something that may strike upon their outward sences and engage their affections; and therefore while we live in this Region of mortality we must make use of such external helps, & recommend Religion to the people by those ornaments which the Church hath according to her prudence thought fittest for those ends. The Church of *Rome* is a luxuriant vine, full of superfluous branches, and overrun with wild grapes, from whence many a poysonous and intoxicating potion is pressed forth; But the greatest part of Reformers have done like the rude *Thracian* in the Apologue, who instead of moderate pruning and dressing his vines, as his more Skillfull *Athenian* Neighbours did, cut them up by the Roots; but the Church of *England* is the only well ordered Vine-yard.

In like mannner they have a deep veneration of her Government, which they stedfastly beleive to be in it self the best, and the same that was practised in the times of the Apostles. They did alwayes abhor both the Usurpation of Scottish Presbytery, and the confusion of Independent Anarchy; and do esteem it one of the methods which the Prince of darkness useth, to overthrow the Church aud Religion, by bringing the Clergy into contempt, which experience tells us will necessarily follow upon the removing the several Dignities and preeminence among them; for when the Bishops are once levelled with ordinary Presbyters, the Presbyters will soon be trampled on by the meanest of the Laity: and when every Preacher would needs be a Bishop, every Rustick and Mechanick took upon him to be a Preacher.

Lastly for the Doctrine of the Church, they do cordially adhere to it, as doth sufficiently appear by their willingness to subscribe to the thirty nine Articles, and all other points of Doctrine contained either in the Liturgy or book of Homilies,

and

and particularly (whatsoever may be privately whispered to the contrary) they do both devoutly adore the blessed Trinity in the Letany, and make solemn profession of their Orthodox faith, both concerning it and other points, in the three Creeds, not excepting that which is commonly ascribed to *Athanasius*, nor is there any Article of Doctrine held forth by the Church, which they can justly be accused to depart from, unless absolute reprobation be one, which they do not think themselves bound to believe.

5. Nor is it credible they should hold any other Doctrine than the Church, since they derive it from the same fountains, not from the *Spinose school-men*, or *Dutch systematicks*, neither from *Rome* nor *Geneva*, the Council of *Trent*, nor Synod of *Dort*, but from the Sacred writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, in interpreting whereof, they carefully attend to the sense of the ancient Church, by which they conceive the modern ought to be guided: and therefore they are very conversant in all the genuine Monuments of the ancient Fathers, those especially of the first and purest ages, not to gather out fine phrases and quaint sentences, but that they may discern between the modern corruptions, and ancient simplicity of the Church; to distinguish between the Doctrines received in these latter ages, and those which the primitive Christians received from Christ and his Apostles: for those opinions in Religion, how specious soever, are justly to be suspected, whereof there are no footsteps to be discerned in that golden age of Christianity, that was tryed and purifyed in the fire of persecution: we are not so secure of the succeeding silver age of peace and prosperity, but that there might be some drossy mixture, inferior to the golden, but better than the brazen that trode upon its heels;

Sævior ingeniis & ad horrida promptior arma, when the Christians had taken up the swords formerly of their persecutors, and drew them one upon another: but

—de duro est ultima ferro,
Protinus erupit venæ pejoris in ævum
Omne nefas; fugere pudor verumque, fidesque,

In quorum ſubiere locum fraudeſque dolique,
Inſidiæque, & vis, & amor ſceleratus habendi.

And by this time ſure there was need of Reformation, to bring all things to the primitive pattern, to purge out the droſs and Tinn, and all baſer mettals, which the Church of *England* hath moſt happily atchieved.

And now let no man accuſe them of hearkning too much to their own reaſon, ſince their reaſon ſteers by ſo excellent a compaſs, the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church. For Reaſon is that faculty whereby a man muſt judge of every thing, nor can a man beleve any thing except he have ſome reaſon for it, whether that reaſon be a deduction from the light of nature, and thoſe principles which are the candle of the Lord, ſet up in the ſoul of every man that hath not wilfully extinguiſhed it; or a branch of Divine revelation in the oracles of holy Scripture; or the general interpretation of genuine antiquity, or the propoſal of our own Church conſentaneous thereto, or laſtly the reſult of ſome or all of theſe: for he that will rightly make uſe of his Reaſon, muſt take all that is reaſonable into conſideration. And it is admirable to conſider how the ſame concluſions do naturally flow from all theſe ſeveral principles; and what in the faithful uſe of the faculties that God hath given, men have believed for true, doth excellently agree with that Revelation that God hath exhibited in the Scripture, and the doctrine of the ancient Church with them both. Thus the freedom of our wills, the univerſal intent of Chriſt's death, and ſufficiency of Gods Grace, the conditions of juſtification, and many other points of the like nature, which have been almoſt exploded in theſe latter degenerate ages of the world, do again begin to obtain, though with different perſons upon different accounts; ſome embrace them for their evidence in Scripture, others for the concurrent teſtimony of the primitive Church for above four hundred years; others for the reaſonableneſs of the things themſelves, and their agreement both with the Divine Attributes and the eaſy ſuggeſtions of their own minds. Nor is there any point in Divinity, where that which is moſt ancient doth

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not prove the moſt rational, and the moſt rational the ancienteſt; for there is an eternal conſanguinity between all verity; and nothing is true in Divinity, which is falſe in Philoſophy, or on the contrary; and therefore what God hath joyned together, let no man put aſunder.

But theſe men are generally ſuſpected to be for liberty of Conſcience, and that's a principle of dangerous conſequence, that will undermine the very foundations of any Church whatſoever: a Church cannot be without Unity and Uniformity; an unlimited diſcord of opinions and practiſes will as much obſtruct the edification of Gods Temple, as the confuſion of Languages did the building of the *Tower of Babel*. Verily this is true; and the moſt part of them, who while they are under the hatches deny it, do by their practiſes confirm it, when ever they get power into their hands; but how far the men charged with it are concerned therein, remains to be inquired. Though in the firſt place I cannot but take notice, that this very objection confutes the vulgar calumny caſt upon them, as if they were men of no conſcience; for I dare ſay, by how much the leſs of conſcience any man hath, by ſo much the leſs will he care what impoſitions are laid on it, though for my own part, I ſhall always think him moſt conſciencious who leads the moſt unblameable life, though he be not greatly ſcrupulous about the externals of Religion; and for their lives I think the *Latitude-men* were never taxed by their greateſt enemyes. And now let us ſoberly conſider what was before ſaid; they ſincerely embrace all the Articles of Doctrine held forth by the Church, they cheerfully uſe and approve her Liturgy and Ceremonies, they cordially love and obey her government: how then can they purſue any Liberty that can be dangerous to her? for in all other things the Church her ſelfe leaves them to their liberty, and who ſhall blame them for uſing it? but there are ſome men it may be, are offended that the Church is ſo indulgent a Mother that will not unneceſſarily impoſe upon the judgement or practiſe of her Children; they would have all things bound up, and nothing free; they would fain be adding ſome ciphers to their ſignificant

ficant Articles ſhe now prodounds, and inſtead of 39 would make 39000.& tis well if they would content themſelves with ciphers, and not add falſityes to make up the tale: they have it may be, an ambition to out-do the Aſſemblies Confeſſion; they would be content that *Aquina*'s Summs were put into the Creed, and all the janglings of the Schools into the Prayers of the Church; that ſo by their *Longitude*, they might be even with their neighbors of the *Latitude*. Others it may be think we have not ceremonies enough, and if they can find any antiquated Rite in ſome moth-eaten Author, they have an itch preſently of bringing it into the Church, without conſidering whether there be the ſame reaſon or uſe of it now, that may have been in other times and places; and then if their Neighbors will not follow their example, but think it enough to do what the Rubrick and Canons require, they ſhall be cryed out on for diſaffected; this is all that liberty of conſcience they can juſtly be accuſed of, unleſs I ſhould add that they are ſo merciful as not to think it fit to knock people on the head becauſe they are not of our Church. The Church of *England* hath never yet embrued her hands in blood, and I hope the Zeal of none of her ſons will ever kinle ſuch flames as her ſtep-mother of *Rome* delights to warm her hands at.

And now having taken an impartial view of this ſo much exagitated company of men, we find them ſo far from being any ways dangerous to the Church, or fit to be diſowned by her, that they ſeem to be the very Chariots and Horſemen thereof; for by their ſober and unblameable converſation, they conciliate reſpect and honour to her; by their Learning and induſtry they defend her; by their moderation they are moſt likely to win upon the minds of diſſenters, who are too many to be contemned; by their accommodatingthemſelves to the people, who (as is too too palpable) are poſſeſſed for the moſt part by the Preſbyterians, they may in time bring them over to the Church, and prevent her becomming a ſociety of Shepherds without any Sheep; for really I fear, if the Fathers of the Church were not wiſer than ſome of their angry ſons, who muſt needs be thruſting ſome of their younger

younger brethren out of dores, if (I say) all that have been reproached with the name of Latitude, should be disowned by the Church, they that remain would be the least party of men of any one denomination in *England*: and to leave themselves so naked, were to tempt Providence for their preservation, especially considering they stand ready to be assaulted on each hand by two potent Enemies, the Papists and the Presbyterians, both of them numerous, wealthy, subtle, and industrious, who watch all opportunities of subverting the best Church in the world. And therefore certainly this is no time for her to mutilate her self, or to bleed with intestine Warr; but let her embrace those that are so ready to serve her, with both her Armes, and let all her Children with joint affection and consent oppose the common Enemies.

6. But it will be said no man is angry that men conform, but that they have no greater zeal for what they conforme to; they are as men indifferent, and could be as well content with the contrary. Truely Sir, either I am mistaken in the men, or the charge is very unjust; for I find as many as it hath been my fortune to converse with, that they do very sincerly esteem *Episcopal* govenment, both as in it self the best, and of Apostolical antiquity; they were alwayes approvers of a Liturgy, and think that of our own Church may easilyer be marred than mended; That Religion would lose that due law & veneration that ought to be preserved in it, if it were not attended with outward Rites and Ceremonies; that private persons are not the judges of that decorum, whereby these things are to be measured, but onely the Governours of the Church; and that the Church of *England*, as well in these as all other things is the best constituted Church in the world. But they presume no man would have them to think the whole weight of Religion lies in externals, or that they are of greater accompt than the eternal and indispensable Laws of good and evil, but that Ecclesiastical laws are as the Jews were wont to say, an hedge about the laws of God; these ought stiffely to be observed, and therefore the other not to be neglected; that they

do not consist so indivisibly, but that if it should seem meet to the Fathers of the Church to make any alterations, they were equally bound to submit thereto; this is that Latitude they are so Tragically accused of.

5. But there is another crime which cannot be denyed, that they have introduced a new Philosophy; *Aristotle* and the Schoolemem are out of request with them. True indeed it is that *ipse dixit* is an argument much out of fashon; and *fortasse Philosophus non loquitur ex sua sententia, sed ex mente aliorum*, would be accounted as impertinent an answer; it will scarce passe for a Philosophical resolution of any Problem to say, It is the nature of the beast, it is done by virtue of its form or quality; They love to search some more particular cause than the influence of the heavens, nor will they be put off with *complementum Universi*. They embrace a method of Philosophy which they think was as much antienter than *Aristotle*, as you conceive *Oxford* was before *Cambridge*; and was as great a bug-beare to the Presbyterians as a Crosse or Surplisse, and therefore methinks the Church of *England* should have less reason to be offended with it. For my own part I never had any great skill in it, and am now too old to learn; yet I am far from that humour reprehended by the Poet,

----Turpe putant parere minoribus, & quæ
Imberbes didicere Senes perdenda fateri.

And I suppose it is this freedome and unconcernedness of mine that makes you think my opinion worth knowing in a matter that I am so little conversant in of late years; wherefore I will not undertake to compare the new Philosophy with the old, but instead thereof will tell you a tale.

7. There was a certain Husbandman who occupied a Farme with an antient mansion-house standing in the fields remote from any Town, where there was an old iron Clock in a large wooden frame, which had been a long while out of kelter, and because he was much troubled to know how the time passed, that he might order his business accordingly, he resolved to get this Clock repaired, and while he was considering

where

where to finde a man able to do it, it fortuned that a certain Peripatetick artificer, ſomething above the degree of a Tinker came that way, who undertook to mend it; but after he had beſtowed a great deal of work in oyling the wheels, filing the teeth, and hanging on more weight, and all to no purpoſe, at laſt gave it up for nought, and told him it could not be mended; the farmer partly out of curioſity, and partly in hope to find out the defect, deſired this Artificer to ſhow him the nature of Clockwork, and what was requiſite to make up a perfect Clock, he though he knew very little what belonged to it, yet being a talkative fellow, and very loth to confeſſe his ignorance in any thing, began a long ſtory, that the nature of Clock-work in general was, *a principle and cauſe of motion and reſt by means of an inward device of its own accord and not by chance*; but this Clock having no ſuch nature, it was indeed no Clock, and could not move; he told him alſo that there are three things go to the making of a Clock, *the materials, and the ſhape, and the want of that ſhape*, before it was made; for it was not a Clock before it was made: now the materials of a Clock are four, Iron, and wood, and cords, and lead; and beſides theſe there is a Bell at the top that is of a fifth kind divers from the other four, and hath a trick of ſounding when the hammer ſtrikes upon it: Iron is a material very black and ſomewhat hard, wood very hard and ſomewhat white, cord very white and ſomewhat ſoft, lead very ſoft and ſomewhat black. Here the Farmer interpoſed and told him he would never believe but that Iron was harder then wood; but the Clockmender replied, that in the Art of Clockmaking ſoftneſs was nothing but being eaſily melted: The Farmer urged then Iron would not be hard at all; but his artificer wittily replying it was hard to be melted, he was ſatisfied; the Clockmender went on, telling him there were other properties alſo in theſe materials derived from the former, as that Iron and wood were ſtiffe and unmoving, cord and lead flexible and moving; here the Farmer interrupted him again, telling him the iron wheels moved as well as the cord and lead, and ſo did the wooden hand of the dyal; to which he anſwered

ſwered they did not move of themſelves as the cord and lead did, and that they moved onely *to avoid ſtanding ſtill*, which is not to be admitted in a clock; but the Farmer ſtill objected, that he ſaw no neceſſity of any ſuch material as wood in a clock; for the frame might as well be of iron; to which he replyed, it was for *the compleatneſs of the clock*. But (quoth the Farmer,) the Bell is hard and black as well as the iron; no, replyed the Engineer, it appears onely ſo, but is not ſo in its own nature, but onely hath a property of ſounding. Well, (quoth the Farmer) you have told me the materials of a clock, which I could have told as well my ſelf, but am never the wiſer; for my Jack hath Iron and Wood, and Cord, and Lead, and if I ſhould hang a Bell on the top of it, it would not prove a clock: that's true ſaid the Clockman, for it hath not the ſhape of a Clock; now the ſhape of a clock is *a certain trick of activity in a piece of wheelwork, by the number of ſtroaks on a Bell, to tell the hour of the day*; from this ſhape there ariſe ſeveral other propertys, as the turning about of the wheels, the playing of the ballance, *a ſecret quality* of the hand pointing to the hour of the day, and a *ſecret agreement* between the hand of the Dyal and the hammer of the Bell; for as often as the hand points to any figure, the hammer ſtrikes juſt ſo many ſtroaks upon the Bell; there is alſo a *hidden diſagreement* between the little weights and the great ones; for as faſt as theſe go down, thoſe go up. There are alſo ſome clocks of another kind, ſome with an Alarum to waken a man at a certain time of the night, ſome have Chimes to play certain Tunes upon Bells: There are alſo imperfect Clocks called Watches that do not ſtrike, but onely have a Dyall with an hand turning round. There are alſo Sun-Dyals that tell the hour of the day by Shadows. But theſe are imperfect Clocks, and not compounded of all four materials; he alſo reckoned up a great many famous Clockmakers of ſeveral Countreys that he had learnt his Art of, as alſo how many Clocks he had mended, and concluded with the praiſe of *Vulcan* and St. *Eloy*, and the whole Art of Smiths work.

8. While

8. While they were thus discourſing, in comes a Lock-ſmith of the next Town, who thought himſelfe as well read in *Clock-Philoſophy*,, as he that had read this long Lecture, who therefore began to move many controverſys, as that Clocks might be made of other materials, *viz.* Steel, Braſs, or Silver, (where by the way, they digreſſed into a long diſpute whether Steeland Iron differed in kind, or in degree onely) that a Bell was not any fifth kind, but made up of a mixture of other mettals; that there were not four materials of a Clock, but that it might be made up of one or two of them; that cords and plummets were no neceſſary parts of it, for it might be moved by a ſpring without them; and many more queſtions they diſputed about till they were both weary.

9. The Farmers Son who was newly come from the Univerſity, where he had been a year or two, & had read *Magirus*, was much taken with theſe learned Lectures of an ordinary Mechanick, & began to ſuſpect he was ſome diſguiſed Scholar, in that he had ſo Philoſophically begun with the definition of nature, *principium & cauſa motus & quietis ejus in quo eſt primo & per ſe, non per accidens*; then proceeded to the three principles, *Matter*, *Form*, and *Privation*; after that to the four Elements of a Clock, with their *Primary* and *Secundary* qualities, and was well pleaſed with his judgement in making the Bell a *Quinteſſence* & to contain the elementary qualities not *formally* but *eminently*; and that *ſoftneſs* ſhould ſignifie *liquability*, anſwered juſt to *humidity* ſignifying *fluidity*; and that it was as eaſie to excuſe the iron from melting, as the fire from fluidity: he thought alſo that he diſtinguiſhed well between natural and violent motions, and took notice how *evitatio vacui & complementum univerſi* did him Knights ſervice. So likewiſe he defined the form of a Clock very well, *actus primus corporis artificialis organici motum habentis in potentia*: and he believed *a trick of activity* was as good an interpretation of ἐντελέχεια as *perfect habia* which *Hermolaus Barbarus* learnt of the Divel. The qualities did admirably well flow from this form, eſpecially The *occult quality* in the Dyall, and its *ſympathy* with the Bell, as alſo the antipathy of the greater and leſſer weights; he alſo ſhewed the ſeveral

ſpecies of Clocks whether *perfectly or imperfectly mixed*; how Watches had only a material vegetative ſoul, the Allarum and Chimes reſembled the rational, but the ordinary Clock was of the order of ſenſitive creatures; & he had excellently well deſcribed the nature of the Beaſt. He ſeemed to be well read in the *ſchool-tinkers*, had ſhewed that *Vulcan* was ancienter than *Ariſtotle*, and St. *Eloy* as great a maſter of Clockwork as *St. Thomas*: onely the Lock-ſmith he thought made foul work with him, and went as much beyond him, as *Carpenter* & *Pemble* the more orthodox *Magirus*, & yet he ſaid he might have moved a great many more perilous queſtions, as whether the hammer were the *intelligencer* of the Bell, and conſequently whether *forma informans* or *aſſiſtens*; whether the Bell did act upon the elementary parts of the clock, or they upon the Bell; and if the former, whether it do it by its blackneſs, or its hardneſs, or its ſound, or by certain influences; and then whether the forms of the four materials did remain in the Clock intire or refracted, or a fift form reſulting from them all, and whether it were a ſubſtantial or accidental form, whether a clock and a watch were *ſpecifically or gradually* diſtinct, with many more which he forbore to mention, as he told them, becauſe they could not underſtand them.

10. All this while the Landlord of this Farmer was in the houſe to take order about ſome repartions, who being an ingenuous Gentleman that had uſed to take in pieces his own Watch and ſet it together again, and therefore could not be ignorant of the fabrick of a clock, having with much patience heard all this Targon, at laſt delivered the good man (who though no fool, yet was never the wiſer for all this diſcourſe) from the impertinences of the Clock-mender and the young Philoſopher: ſhewing him that the cauſe of motion was in the weights, which by the multiplication of indented wheels, and Nuts, was ſo moderated, that the laſt wheel to the end of whoſe Axel the hand was fixed, was juſt twelve hours in turning about, & that there were in every twelfth part of that wheel certain peggs that lifted up the hold-faſt of the hammer, which by the motion of other wheels & ſprings would be made to ſtrike ſeveral ſucceſſive ſtroaks upon the Bell, till the

holdfaſt catch in the next notch of a wheele indented ſeveral diſtances according to the number of ſtroaks at each time to be ſtrucken: he ſhewed him alſo that the teeth of the great wheel were ſo worn, that it would not anſwer to the juſt proportion of time it ſhould move in, and therefore he muſt get a new one made; in fine he taught him how the motion was derived from part to part, that he throughly underſtood the whole fabrick, and could be able to rectifie any ordinary fault that ſhould happen in it. But the Son all this while being as inept at underſtanding things, as apt Parrot-like to catch at words, was diſſatisfied that he ſhould take no more notice of the ſubſtantial form and qualities of a Clock, and told him that he rejected principles, and therefore he would not diſpute with him.

11. How far the Clock-menders diſcourſe reſembles the Scholaſtick Philoſophy, or the Gentlemans the atomicall, let others judge; I ſhall onely propound this general Query, whether it be any better Philoſophy, to ſay that nature makes the fire to burn, or there is an inward principle of gravity in a ſtone that makes it fall down, than it would be mechanicall ſkill to ſay that Art makes the Clock ſtrike, or to ſay that ſome inward device makes the hand of the dyall move; for as Art is to artificials, ſo is nature to naturals; and may be he ſpake more truly than he was aware of, that called it *Ars Dei*. Then certainly it muſt be the Office of Philoſophy to find out the proceſs of this Divine Art in the great automaton of the world, by obſerving how one part moves another, and how thoſe motions are varied by the ſeverall magnitudes, figures, poſitions of each part, from the firſt ſprings or plummets, as I may ſay, to the hand that points out the viſible and laſt effects; This Phyſicians have taken the boldneſſe in part to do, in thoſe little watches, if I may ſo call them, the bodies of animals, and *Deſcartes* hath proceeded fartheſt in the like attempt, in that vaſt machin, the Univerſe, with how good ſucceſſe, others are better able to Judge; But this I dare boldly ſay, it was a noble effort, and if he had wholly failed in it, he would have been more pitied and leſs envied.

12. This farther I ſhall adde in the behalf of new and free

Philoſophy, That the Theater of nature is much enlarged ſince *Ariſtotles* time, and there is no part of the world wherein there are not ſome notable new Phœnomena lately diſcovered, that muſt needs be of great accompt in natural Philoſophy: for in the Heavens by the help of teleſcopes (a new invention) there are found an innumerable company of fixed Stars unknown to the ancients, and amongſt the planets the *anſulæ* of *Saturn* and four Moons about *Jupiter* were never heard of till *Galileo's Nuncius Sidereus* brought the news, the various phaſes of Venus (and other Planets) as alſo her being ſometimes on this ſide the Sun, ſometimes beyond, were the ſuſpicions of the Pythagoreans of old, and the certain knowledge of latter times, but not agreeable with *Ariſtotles* doctrine. Mountains and valleys in the Moon were never ſeen before this age, and no body now will venture to deny but that ſhe is as opake as the earth, and borrows as much light from her as ſhe lends. That the Sun is full of ſcummy ſpots continually generated and deſtroyed, and that he turns round upon his own axis. They that will not truſt *Schiner*, may be informed by their own eyes; the appearing of new Stars & diſappearing of old was not conſidered by the ancients, nor their appearing ſomtimes bigger & ſomtimes leſs that comets are above the moon, & the Heavens fluid ſince *Tycho* few men have doubted, and therefore *Ariſtotles* Intelligences that moved the ſolid Orbs, have leave to play; and ſince that arched roof is gone, I know not how the Elementary fire will be kept in: But if it ſhould chance to prove true (and who knows what poſterity may beleive, ſince we have been ſo hardy as to admit *Antipodes*, which our anceſtours beheld as no leſs formidable a bugbear?) that the Earth is a planet, and the Sun a fixed Starr, and by conſequence every planet an Earth, every fixed Starr a Sun, it would make foul work in the Vulgar Philoſophy.

13. But let us deſcend upon the Earth, where we ſhall find that Dr. *Gilbert*, inſtead of the *Oxford* Fryers great black rock at the North Pole, hath perſwaded all men that the whole Earthly Globe is a Magnet; and though the Ancients knew no more of the Loadſtone than its coition which they improperly called attraction, we now find it to be no leſſe remarkable for

its polar direction (not without ſome variation in ſeverall places) as alſo its various inclination according to its ſeverall diſtance from the Æquator and Poles; but the nature of the load-ſtone can ſcarce be unknown, ſince we have ſeen the circles of the duſt about it. The diſtinct History of the Flux and Reflux of the Sea, is alſo amongſt the *nova reperta*. The ancients overlook't that moſt Luciferous though obvious experiment of the ſling, nor did they know what uſe to make of the Chryſtall priſme; They were over-careleſſe ſpectatours of the rainbow; the roſy-figured particles of ſnow eſcaped their ſight; but it were infinite to perſue particulars; I will not ſtand to reckon up the ſeverall diſcoveries we are beholden to the new invented microſcope for, nor ſhall I inſiſt upon the many Chymical experiments that are of uſe in Philoſophy. I paſſe by the wonderous effects of Gun-powder, nor ſhall I mention the diſcoveries of the Air-pump lately exhibited to the world by that Noble Gentleman, or the ingenious experiments of *Galileo*, Lord *Bacon*, and many others.

14. I ſhall onely touch upon one Topick more, which is the improvement of Anatomy, and the knowledge of the fabrick of Animals; no man thinks himſelf bound to beleive that the nerves are derived from the heart, and by conſequence that to be the ſeat of common ſence, becauſe *Ariſtotle* tells us ſo; nor yet, though he could tell us no ſuch thing, to diſbelieve the circulation of blood found out by Dr. *Harvey*; What ſhould I mention thoſe other learned Obſervations of the ſame Author concerning the Generation of Animals? I omit *Aſellius* his *venæ lacteæ*, as alſo the *ductus Chyliferus*, *vaſa lymphatica*, with many more of the like nature, which do as much alter the face of the leſſer, as thoſe other before rehearſed of the greater world.

15. Muſt we now after all theſe and many more diſcoveries about natural bodies, confine our ſelves to what we find in *Ariſtotle* who never dream'd of any ſuch things? is it poſſible that ſo many new appearances ſhould not alter the frame of Philoſophy, nay rather hazard the pulling down of the old ruinous houſe that had too narrow foundations, that it may be built again with more magnificence? Since we find dayly

Generations and corruptions in the heavens, and that the ſtars themſelves are not free from that fate, how can we ſatisfy our ſelves with the four Elements of *Ariſtotle*, or the three principles of the Chymiſts, which at beſt can be but the ingredients of terreſtriall bodies? beſides that they are not ſo ſimple as to deſerve thoſe titles? and truly to them that have once taſted of the Mechanicall Philoſophy, formes and qualities are like to give as little ſatisfaction, as the Clock-mender did to the Intelligent Gentleman in the Story I before told you.

16. No man would be ſo ridiculous as ſince *Columbus* diſcovered the new world of *America*, as big as the old, or ſince the enlarged knowledge of the North of *Europe*, the South and Eaſt of *Aſia* and *Africa*, beſides the new diviſions names and inhabitants of the old parts, to forbid the reading of any more Geography than is found in *Strabo* or *Mela*; or ſince the *Portugues* have ſailed to the *Indies* by the Cape of good Hope, to admit of no other Indian commodities than what are brought on Camels to *Aleppo*; or if poſterity ſhall find out the North-eaſt or Northweſt way to *Cathaja* and *China*, or ſhall cut the Iſthmus between the red Sea and Mediterranean, will it be unlawfull to uſe the advantage of ſuch noble atchievements: why then muſt Philoſophy alone be bound up till in its infant ſwadling bands? and there being the ſame reaſon, why ſhould we not allow the ſame liberty of expatiating? if any man love acorns ſince corn is invented, let him eat acorns; but tis very unreaſonable he ſhould forbid others the uſe of wheat. Whatever is ſolid in the writings of *Ariſtotle*, theſe new Philoſophers will readily embrace and they that are moſt accuſed for affecting the new, doubt not but they can give as good an acount of the old Philoſophy as their moſt violent accuſers, and are probably as much converſant in *Ariſtotles* writings, though they do not much value thoſe ſmall wares that are uſually retailed by the generality of his Interpreters.

But me thinks I hear ſome men ſay, all innovations are dangerous; *Philoſophy* and *Divinity* are ſo inter-woven by the School-men, that it cannot be fate to ſeparate them; *new Philoſophy* will bring in *new Divinity*: and freedom in the one will make men deſire a liberty in the other. The very ſame argu-

mentation the Presbyterians used, when they bore rule in the University, and the *new Philosophy* was interdicted in some Colledges upon that account. But what was the event? it was so much the more eagerly studyed and embraced; there was a time when all Learning was upon the same pretence discountenanced; *Græce nosse suspectum erat, Hebraice plane hæreticum*; and there was a Colledge in *Cambridge* that shut their Gates against the *Greek Testament*: but all their endeavours were but vain; they might as well have hindred the Sun from rising, or being up, from filling the whole *Horizon* with light; Learning and Knowledge will breake forth like fire, and pierce like Lightning through all impediments; politeness and elegancy hath long ago subdued Monastick barbarism; *Erasmus* and *Melanthon* with the rest of those restorers of Learning have made *Holcot* and *Bricot* quite out of fashion; and the inquisitive *Genius* of latter years, like a mighty wind hath brushed down all the Schoolmens Cobwebs. There is an infinite desire of knowlede broken forth in the world, and men may as well hope to stop the tide, or bind the Ocean with Chains, as hinder free *Philosophy* from overflowing: it will be as easie to satisfie mens corporal appetites with chaff and straw, as the desires of their minds with empty words and terms; the Church of *Rome* quickly saw her error in this point, and forbore to strive against the stream; for when she perceived that Learning would be in fashion, she presently set her children to School; and who so great Schollars in all kinds as they? and she hath been so wise ever since, that there shall be no piece of Learning but some of her sons shall be masters of it: and if they will but give her respectfull words, they may be as free Philosophers as they please; and I dare say she would take it very ill, if any one should deny *Descartes* or *Gassendus* to be hers. *Galileo* indeed fell under correction for holding the motion of the Earth, but the true crime was his abusing his Holiness in his Dialogues under the name of *Simplicius*; For others have with impunity adventured on as great *Paradoxes*, but they had the good manners to make a legg and say, *Omnia Ecclesiæ authoritati submittimus.*

I will never therefore believe, that the Church of *England* can

be more ſtingy than the Beldame of *Rome*, but will do that of choice, that the other doth of neceſſity. True *Philoſophy* can never hurt ſound *Divinity*. Chriſtian Religion was never bred up in the *Peripatetick ſchool*, but ſpent her beſt and healthfulleſt years in the more Religious *Academy*, amongſt the primitive Fathers; but the Schoolmen afterwards raviſhed her thence, and ſhut her up in the decayed ruines of *Lyceum*, where ſhe ſerved an hard ſervitude, and contracted many diſtempers: why ſhould ſhe not at laſt be ſet at liberty, and ſuffered to breath in a free air? let her alone be Miſtreſs, and chooſe her Servants where ſhe beſt likes; let her old loving Nurſe the *Platonick Philoſophy* be admitted again into her family; nor is there any cauſe to doubt but the Mechanick alſo will be faithful to her, no leſs againſt the open violence of *Atheiſme*, than the ſecret treachery of *Enthuſiaſm* and *Superſtition*, as the excellent works of a late learned Author have abundantly demonſtrated. Nor will it be poſible otherwiſe to free Religion from ſcorn and contempt, if her Prieſts be not as well skilled in nature as the people, and her Champions furniſhed with as good Artillery as her enemies. How ſhall the Clergy be able to maintain their credit with the ingenuous Gentry, who begin generally to be acquainted with the *atomical Hypotheſis*, and know how to diſtinguiſh between a true Gemme and a *Briſtol*-Diamond? or how ſhall they encounter with the witts (as they are called) of the age, that aſſault Religion with new kind of weapons? will they acquieſce in the authority of *Ariſtotle* or St. *Thomas*? or be put off with *Contra negantem principia*? let not the Church ſend out her Souldiers armed with Dock-leaves and Bullruſhes, to encounter ſwords and Guns, but let them wear as good braſs and ſteel as their enemyes, and fight withthem at their own weapons; and then having Truth and Right on their ſide, let them never deſpair of victory.

But I had almoſt forgotten that I was writing a Letter, the ordinary proportions whereof I have already exceeded, and therefore muſt abruptly conclude, aſſuring you that I am

Cambridge Sir yours, &c.